

Message Text

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UNCLAS STATE 101445 TOSEC 040174

FOR HODDING CARTER FROM TOM RESTON

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS BRIEFING

1. THE THURSDAY, APRIL 20 BRIEFING REMAINED ROUTINE, WITH
THE SPOKESMAN COVERING THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

2. A MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN ISRAELI AUTHORITIES AND
EDMOND HULL, US VICE CONSUL AT JERUSALEM, AS TO WHETHER HE
WAS LEGITIMATELY TOURING A MILITARILY CONTROLLED SETTLEMENT
ON THE WEST BANK. THE SPOKESMAN GAVE A FACTUAL DESCRIPTION
OF THE EVENTS AND STATED THAT THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES
CONSIDERED THE MATTER CLOSED.

3. AN AMERICAN PING PONG TEAM WILL BE GOING TO NORTH
KOREA IN 1979 FOR A WORLD-WIDE COMPETITION. THIS HAS
CAUSED A FUROR IN SOUTH KOREA. SPOKESMAN DENIED ANY
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POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS, STRESSING THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT
HAD NO ROLE IN THIS PURELY PRIVATE DECISION, AND THE
QUESTION OF OUR GIVING PERMISSION FOR THEM TO GO DID NOT
ARISE. HE ALSO REITERATED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE
IN OUR POSITION ON TALKS WITH THE NORTH KOREANS.

4. SPOKESMAN WAS ABLE TO CONFIRM THAT ISRAELI FONMIN DAYAN

WOULD BE COMING TO WASHINGTON FOR TALKS WITH SECRETARY, TENTATIVELY SET FOR LATE NEXT WEEK, AND THAT AMBASSADOR ATHERTON WOULD BE RETURNING TO WASHINGTON FROM CAIRO FOR THOSE TALKS.

5. FINALLY, SPOKESMAN READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT ABOUT CHILE'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN AMNESTY:

"WE HAVE SEEN REPORTS OF THE AMNESTY AND WE HAVE OUR EMBASSY'S INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF ITS SIGNIFICANCE. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE AMNESTY GOES BEYOND RECENT PUBLIC INDICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS. THE AMNESTY APPEARS TO HAVE A FAVORABLE IMPACT UPON THOSE POLITICAL PRISONERS REMAINING IN CHILE AND UPON MANY THOUSANDS OF CHILEAN EXILES ABROAD.

"THE AMNESTY IS A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE TO IMPROVEMENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THAT COUNTRY.

"WE EXPRESS OUR HOPE THAT CHILE IS STARTING ON THE PATH TOWARD RESTORATION OF A SYSTEM OF OPEN AND REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN THE MUCH ADMIRERD CHILEAN DEMOCRATIC TRADITION." CHRISTOPHER

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